

Film portrays secret life of woman who was Confederate soldier

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newwave@tulane.edu

Shrouded in mystery and long the subject of debate, the story of Loreta Velazquez is one of the Civil War's most gripping forgotten narratives. A Cuban immigrant raised in New Orleans' French Quarter, she was one of the estimated 1,000 women who secretly served as soldiers during the American Civil War. *Rebel*, a documentary film of her life, will be screened in New Orleans on Jan. 17.



In the documentary *Rebel*, actress Romi Dias portrays Loreta Velazquez as a woman at left, and passing as Civil War Lt. Harry T. Buford on the right. (Photo by Gerard Gaskin)

The screening, sponsored by the Stone Center for Latin American Studies at Tulane University and the Newcomb College Institute, starts at 7 p.m. at the [Ogden Museum of Southern Art](#), 925 Camp St. Latin American film scholar Ana Lopez of Tulane will provide an introduction, followed by a Q&A with *Rebel* writer and director MarÃa Agui Carter.

Carter conducted research for the film in 2002â“2003 while she served as a Rockefeller Fellow at the [Stone Center](#).

Actors and historians bring Velazquez' story to life in the documentary, weaving drama and animation with historical and archival material to unravel the mystery of this secret soldier in a detective story about a woman, a myth and the politics of national memory.

The [film](#) is based on a 600-page memoir by Velazquez, *A Woman in Battle*, which caused a sensation when it was published in 1876 and remains in print today.

In previous interviews, writer and director Agui Carter has said that the memoir by Velazquez gives a rare insight into war from both a woman's and a Latina's point of view. Although the memoir was dismissed as a hoax for more than a century, historians have recently discovered documents proving that Velazquez did indeed exist.

Velazquez was a rebel who flouted all the rules to become a part of American history, Agui Carter has said.

Admission to the screening is free with a Tulane ID or Ogden membership. The event is open to the public with tickets available for \$10.